

**Kitāb al-Sawm (The Book of Fasting)**

Issue 543, Sent by Muhammad Aslam Khan, son of Mr. Muhammad Sarfraz Khan; 12th Rajab

**Question**

Should one eat *Saharī/Sahūr* [pre-dawn meal] for voluntary [Nafil] fasts or not? Also, after the obligatory prayer, should one offer the Sunnah prayers first or break the fast first?

**Answer**

Eating *Saharī/Sahūr* is a *Sunnah*.

The Hadith states, '*Have Saharī/Sahūr, for there is blessing in Saharī/Sahūr.*'

There is no distinction between voluntary [Nafil] and obligatory [Fard] fasts regarding this matter; having *Saharī/Sahūr* is recommended in all cases. It is preferred to break the fast before offering the prayer.

Just as it is stated in *Durr Mukhtār*, '*It is recommended to delay Saharī/Sahūr and hasten to break the fast.*'

Additionally, it is stated in a Hadīth, '*Three things are from the manners of the Prophets: Hastening to break the fast, delaying Saharī/Sahūr, and using the Miswāk (tooth-stick).*'

Allāh knows best.

Issue 544; Sent by Ameen-Ud-Deen; 27th Ramadān

**Question**

What do the scholars of religion say regarding this issue: In the region of Bengal, the crescent moon of the first day is not visible, and for six months, the sky remains cloudy. In such a situation, is it permissible to observe the fasts of Ramadan based on astronomical calculations instead of moon sighting?

**Answer**

In Islamic law, the determination of the month is based on actual moon sighting [*ru'yah*] or credible testimony. The *Hadīth* states, '*Fast when you see the moon and break your fast when you see it. If it is obscured by clouds, then complete the month as thirty days.*'

Merely relying on astronomical calculations [*hisāb al-nujūm*] is not sufficient to establish moon sighting, nor is it permissible to act upon it.

Just as it is mentioned in *Durr Mukhtār*, '*The statement of astronomers regarding the timing of the moon is not considered reliable in legal rulings, nor is it accepted according to the authoritative position of the Hanafi school.*'

Allāh knows best.